



Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee

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65th Montana Legislature

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August 8, 2018

Sheila Hogan, Director
Department of Public Health and Human Services
111 N. Sanders, Suite 301
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Director Hogan,

I'm writing on behalf of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee to request information about the decisions the Department of Public Health and Human Services is making about the use of funds restored to the agency pursuant to Senate Bill 9 from the November 2017 special session and Senate Bill 261 from the regular session. The committee would like to know the criteria that you are using to make these decisions.

As you know, the committee held a meeting on August 6 to take comment from stakeholders about how the funds should be used. The meeting was similar to the one that you and Budget Director Dan Villa held on August 1. Many stakeholders expressed their appreciation for the meeting you held and for the opportunity that our committee provided for them to offer comment on the critical services that DPHHS provides to Montanans who have disabilities, cradle to grave, and Montanans who are senior citizens.

Based on the comments the committee received, the members agreed to ask that you provide us with a list of each cut that is being restored, the amount of the cut, and the amount of the restoration, as well as the reason each funding decision was made. The committee is interested in not only the restorations made to services and benefits but also any other restorations, whether those decisions involve personal services, contracts, or other department activities. Whenever a federal law or regulations factors into a restoration decision, we would be interested in knowing which law or regulation was involved and the role it played in your decisions. We also would like to know which restorations will require rulemaking under the Montana Administrative Procedure Act and which the department can implement without public comment.

We also ask that the administration focus on the legislative intent of Senate Bill 9 in restoring funding. That bill discusses the funding of essential services and defines those services as services delivered:

- to the most vulnerable populations;
- to families, children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities; and
- to ensure a continuum of care that allows individuals to remain in the least restrictive environment.

This suggestion is based on the testimony we received about the ways in which the recent budget cuts have affected the capacity of community providers to support Montanans to be self-reliant, to reach their full potential, and to live as independently as possible in the least restrictive environment. The testimony the committee heard prioritized the need to restore funds for provider rates and for actual services provided to Medicaid beneficiaries in communities throughout the state.

Finally, the committee asks that you provide the list detailing how the department will use the restored funds and the other requested information by September 10, 2018. This would give us time to review the information before our final meeting on September 13-14.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to receiving the information.

Sincerely,

Senator Mary Caferro
Presiding Officer

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